

PASTOR'S NOTES

The King Calls Sinners | Mark 2:13-17

Last week, we saw that Jesus has divine authority to forgive sins. Today's text answers the question, "What kind of sinner is Jesus willing to forgive?"

The King Calls an Unlikely Disciple

Levi/Matthew (a Jewish tax collector for Rome)

When Mark introduces Levi, he does not introduce us to a respectable man searching for God. He introduces us to a man whom respectable people wanted nothing to do with, a traitor of his own people, a sinner.

And then Mark says something beautiful: *"As [Jesus] passed by, he saw Levi."* Levi may not have been looking for Jesus, but Jesus was looking at him. Jesus walked directly into Levi's life and spoke two words that would change everything: "Follow me."

Jesus straightforwardly commands, *"Follow me."* And Levi *rose and followed him*.

King Jesus speaks with authority. But we should also notice the grace of his call. In grace, Jesus takes the initiative. He sees Levi, approaches him, and calls him. And Levi responds to Christ's call with faith and obedience.

Mark does not tell us what was happening in Levi's heart at that moment. But the rest of Scripture helps us understand what must happen in the heart of every sinner who responds to Christ. We are spiritually dead in our trespasses and sins until God makes us alive. The Holy Spirit gives life to the spiritually dead, opening the heart to see Christ for who he is and enabling the sinner to respond in repentance and faith.

The Spirit gives life, the sinner repents and believes, and the evidence of that faith is a new direction of life, following Jesus.

The King Welcomes Sinful People

Luke tells us that Levi made Jesus *a great feast in his house*. Apparently, Levi's first response to the grace he received was to gather the people he knew around Jesus to celebrate. And who does a tax collector know? Other tax collectors and sinners.

Many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. (Mark 2:15)

Jesus was purposeful in being in the company of tax collectors and sinners. Mark tells us why: "For there were many who followed him." In other words, Jesus calls one tax collector, and before long he is surrounded by many tax collectors and sinners.

Note: When Levi begins following Jesus, he does not immediately abandon everyone he knew before. Instead, he brings Jesus into his circle of friends and acquaintances. Jesus never participated in their sin, but their sin didn't keep him away either. He entered their world purposefully, bringing the grace and truth of God with him.

When God saves you or does something fresh in your life, you'll have wonderful opportunities to influence others and bring them to Christ.

Perhaps one of the most natural opportunities God has given you for gospel influence is found among the people you already know. Who around you, in your sphere of life, needs Jesus?

The scribes and Pharisees cannot understand why someone claiming to speak for God would associate himself with such people. Is this scene not incredibly ironic? The sinners are inside with Jesus while the religious are standing outside criticizing him. One group knows they are sinners and wants to be near Jesus. The other group is convinced of their own righteousness and cannot understand why Jesus would draw near to such people.

The King Came to Call Sinners

Jesus: *"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."* (Mark 2:17 ESV)

Jesus uses an illustration everyone understands. Where would you expect to find a physician? Around sick people. He is saying, "You want to know why I am surrounded by sinners? Because sinners are the people I came to save." Christ's mission is clear: *"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."*

The scribes and Pharisees could see everyone's sin but their own. And that remains one of the great dangers for people today.

Maybe you're thinking the opposite, convinced that you have gone too far, sinned too greatly, or wandered too long for Jesus to want you. If so, then the story of Jesus and Levi is for you. Christ is sufficient to save!

Who is sitting at a tax booth around you?

Today's passage tells us something about Christ's mission for each of us. We cannot faithfully follow a King who came to call sinners while spending our lives avoiding them.

This passage makes two primary appeals.

1. If you are the sinner who needs the Physician, hear the King's call: "Follow me."
2. And if you are already following Jesus, follow Levi's example. Bring the sinners you know near to Jesus. Introduce people to the Savior who still calls sinners.



MeadowBrook
CHURCH

Sunday, September 27, 2026 • Pastor Randy Gunter
mbchurch.com



The Forge: Father/Son Retreat

November 6-7, 2026

WorldSong Missions Place | Cook Springs

\$45 Per Child / \$90 Per Adult
{ \$20 deposit per registrant }

Register on the App or mbchurch.com





NEXT STEPS

TAKE THE NEXT STEP AT MEADOWBROOK

NEXT STEPS LUNCH

TODAY | 11:45 AM | CONFERENCE CENTER

This lunch is for anyone who has been attending and prayerfully considering membership at MeadowBrook. We'll walk through our doctrine, beliefs, structure and answer any questions you may have. (Pre-requisite for membership)



FOUNDATIONS for
Marriage

New class for engaged or newly married couples
begins Next Sunday, Oct 4 at 10:30 AM in Rm 302

55+ SUNDAY LUNCH
with JOHN BRADY, IMB
VP for GLOBAL AFFAIRS
OCT 11 | 11:35 AM | GYM
COST: \$10



This Sunday lunch gathering offers a meaningful opportunity to enjoy a meal together while hearing firsthand how God is at work around the world through global missions. Dr. John Brady, Vice President for Global Affairs at the IMB, will share timely insights, stories from the field, and encouragement to strengthen our vision for the Great Commission and inspire faithful engagement in God's mission. **Cost: \$10 / Register on the App or mbchurch.com**



WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS WEEK!

TODAY
8:00-8:20 am - Sunday Morning Prayer Time - W105
9:00 & 10:30 am - Worship - Worship Center
9:00 & 10:30 am - Life Group
9:00-11:30 am - MeadowBrook Kids - Kids' Theater
9:00-11:30 am - MeadowBrook Preschool
11:45 am - Next Steps Lunch - Conference Center
4:00 pm - Global Missions Cohort - Round Room

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
10:00 am - GriefShare - Conference Center
4:30 pm - Men's Bible Study - Conference Center

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 29
Abundant Life Choir singing at Gadsden Health & Rehab
9:30 am - Tuesday Bible Study - Dining Hall

SEPTEMBER 30 - OCTOBER 10
55+ New England Fall Cruise

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30
5:00 pm - Fellowship Meal - Gym
(Chicken Sandwich, Potato Soup, Salad Bowl & Dessert or Salad with a Protein / Kids: Same or PB&J)
5:30 pm - Kids' Choir - Room 210
6:30 pm - Wednesday Breakouts, Preschool Ministry, KidStuf, Middle School Worship, High School Worship, Worship Ministry Rehearsal

2026 DAILY BIBLE READING

September 27 - Nehemiah 11	October 1 - Acts 1
September 28 - Nehemiah 12:1-26	October 2 - Acts 2
September 29 - Nehemiah 12:27-47	October 3 - Acts 3
September 30 - Nehemiah 13	



Take the next step toward finding Christ-Centered community at MeadowBrook by visiting a Life Group.

For a listing of our classes, pick up a Life Group booklet at Guest Connections.

Welcome

If you are our GUEST, we'd like to CONNECT with you! Please fill out a CONNECTION CARD and stop by GUEST CONNECTIONS for a FREE gift!



Stop by Guest Connections or Ministry Central to pick up MeadowBrook's 2026 4th Quarter Global & Local MISSIONS PARTNER Prayer Booklet

55+ CHRISTMAS LUNCH
at the TATE HOUSE
TATE, GA | DEC 3 | Cost: \$70
Register on the App or mbchurch.com





HIGH SCHOOL WINTER RETREAT '26

MONDAY, DECEMBER 28-THURSDAY, DECEMBER 31
WINTERPLACE SKI RESORT // WEST VIRGINIA
REGISTRATION + DETAILS ON THE APP & MBCHURCH.COM



Prayer Needs

Cancer/Treatments: Kyle Hughes, Margie Martin, Robert Darnell, Aiden Beck, Larry Hill, Jamye Ingram, Anna Rae Wilson, Tiki Kemp McConnell, Charles Wells, Bonnie Pierce, Scott Watford, Sharon Tillison, Paul Roberts, Carol Collins, David Hindsman

Ongoing Needs: Bebe Pruett, Chris Burnette, Lloyd & Diane Matthews, Susan Mize, Lola-Ruth Adams, Landon Cunningham, Archie Wade, Denise Dover, Peggy Brizendine, Kathy Thompson, Jimmy & DeLores Thompson, Lavelle Ogletree, Danny Maddox, Robin Roberts, Ron Crawford, Phil Causey, Janet Maise, Rita Tipton, David Draper, Reese Robinson, Charlotte Taylor, Lindsey Rakestraw, Laura Hoge, Tim Davis, Gary Alexander, Karen Ragan, Linda Roy, Joan Henry, Linda Dees, Gerry Grant, Dorothy Hand, Kenny Cahall, Ivan Fike

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| • Kevin Amberson & family in the loss of his stepfather | • Brian Shetley & family in the loss of his mother |
| • Charlie Wells - UAB | • Verlene Cobb - Riverview |
| • Angie Keener - recovering from heart cath | • Larry Parker - recovering from surgery |